

# What is granuloma annulare?

Granuloma annulare (GA) is a skin condition that causes round or ring-shaped bumps on the skin. These bumps can be pink, brown, or skin-colored. They often appear on the hands, feet, elbows, or knees. They sometimes itch, but they usually do not cause pain.

There are 3 types of GA:

## 1. Localized GA

Localized GA is the most common type of GA. It is limited to a few areas of the body, like the hands, feet, elbows, or knees.

## 2. Generalized GA

Generalized GA is much less common. This type can be seen on many areas of the body at once. Common spots include the trunk, armpits, and groin. It may be more itchy than other types of GA.

## 3. Deep GA

Deep GA is also called subcutaneous GA, meaning it occurs under the skin. This type causes hard lumps under the skin. It is most common on the scalp, fingers, feet, and shins.

## HOW DO I RECOGNIZE GA?

Granuloma annulare is recognized by its round shape. In lighter skin tones, GA often looks pink or red. On darker skin tones, GA spots might look pink, red, or brown.

## WHAT CAUSES GRANULOMA ANNULARE?

The reason for GA is often unknown. Sometimes GA appears after trauma to the skin, bug bites, or on areas of the body exposed to the sun.

GA can happen at any age. It is quite common in school-aged kids. It is not contagious, meaning it can't be spread to other people.

## IS ANY TESTING NEEDED FOR GRANULOMA ANNULARE?

GA can often be diagnosed by looking at the skin. In some cases, a small piece of skin might be removed (a biopsy) and examined under a microscope to confirm it is GA.

Blood tests are sometimes recommended in adults with generalized GA, since this form can be triggered by diabetes or high cholesterol. These lab changes are not common in kids.

## HOW IS GRANULOMA ANNULARE TREATED?

There are many treatments for GA, because they all can work for some patients. If GA is not bothering the child, some families choose no treatment. Over time, GA can go away without treatment.

Treatment options include:

- » **Observation:** GA can go away on its own without any treatment. This tends to happen within 2 years. GA does not usually leave a scar.
- » **Topical treatments:** If itchy or bothersome, patients may be given a prescription for creams or ointments to help with itching and redness.
- » **Steroid injections:** A medicine called a steroid can be injected into the skin to help it go away faster. This is an option for older children and adults who are bothered by GA and do not mind the shots.
- » **Light therapy:** In cases where GA occurs in many areas of the body or is very itchy, light therapy (phototherapy) can be used to treat GA.
- » **Oral medications:** When GA is all over the body, doesn't go away, and is persistent, doctors might prescribe oral medications to treat GA.



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